



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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22 October 2004

RUS43014.E

Russia: Whether a residency permit expires if the holder has been out of the country for a period of five years or longer; whether a residence permit issued for St-Petersberg and/or Chelyabinsk-70 can expire; the procedure for renewing a residency permit or obtaining a new one
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

For general information on internal passports and residency permits, please refer to RUS42802.E of 22 July 2004, RUS42049.E of 24 October 2003, RUS41962.E of 13 September 2003 and RUS41401.E of 24 March 2003.

The following information was provided in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by a representative of the Consular Division at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa on 6 October 2004:

[A]ccording to the Russian law[,] Russian citizens travel abroad with [their] international passport. Each person who [is supposed] to go back to Russia must have [a] valid international passport or [a] valid travel permit [called] "Certificat de Rapatriement." ... [Any] stamps in an internal passport are the matter of Local Offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which have [their] own regulations and cannot influence the border crossing process.

On 18 October 2004, a representative of Human Rights Watch in Russia provided the following information, which he obtained from various sources, including a representative of the Moscow Helsinki Group in Russia:

All Russian citizens must have an internal passport and those who travel abroad must hold a "foreign passport." Residence status for Russian citizens varies according to the stamps in the two passports.

Russian citizens travelling abroad for a short period of time do not require any stamps except an entry visa. Citizens travelling for the purpose of living abroad must hold a "*vyezd na postoyannoe mesto zhitelstva*" stamp in their passport. This stamp "certif[ies] that [the person does] not have legal or financial obligations inside the country."

With a "*zaregistrirovan*" stamp in his/her internal passport, a person is entitled to live at the address indicated, whereas a "*snyat s registratsii*" stamp "means that [his/her] registration is cancelled."

If a Russian citizen's last address was in St-Petersburg and he/she has a stamp called "*zaregistrirovan*" in his/her internal passport, he/she can return to St-Petersburg without any problems. "The law does not say anything regarding [a] 5-year period. In other words the registration does not expire."

If the person last lived in St-Petersburg and had in his internal passport a "*snyat s registratsii*" stamp, he/she will have problems getting a "*zaregistrirovan*" stamp again. The process will be easier "if [he/she] owns [his/her] apartment."

However, if the last stamp in a person's internal passport was for a residence in Chelyabinsk-70, he/she would encounter problems returning to that location because the rules are stricter since nuclear research and development projects are concentrated there.

The Human Rights Watch Representative added that "[a]s a rule, to receive the stamp '*vyezd na postoyannoe mesto zhitelstva*' in your foreign passport, you need to get the stamp '*snyat s registratsii*' in your internal passport first."

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Embassy of the Russian Federation, Ottawa. 6 October 2004. Correspondence from a representative of the Consular Division.

Human Rights Watch, Moscow Office. 18 October 2004. Correspondence from a representative.

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: *CIA World Factbook*, Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa, Federal Law on Russian Federation Citizenship of May 31, 2002, United States Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2003.

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